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TAGS: [IS KMDR MEDIA REACTION REPORT](#)
SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

1. Gaza and Northern West Bank Disengagement
2. Mubarak Presidential Campaign
3. Iraq

Key stories in the media:

All media reported that the evacuation of Netzarim on Monday concluded the departure of all Gaza settlers.

At noon local time today, the electronic media were reporting on progress in the evacuation of the West Bank settlements of Homesh and Sa-Nur by security forces. Maariv had cited the security forces' concern that Homesh would present the greater amount of resistance. Yediot quoted IDF Chief of Staff Dan Halutz as saying that anybody who opens fire will be neutralized immediately. The media quoted spokesmen for the Yesha Council of Jewish Settlers in the Territories and other right-wing leaders as saying that the idea that armed disengagement opponents are holed up in those settlements is a fabrication. Maariv reported that September 8 has been set as the date of the final withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

Yediot, Jerusalem Post and Israel Radio quoted President Bush as saying Monday before the National Convention of Veterans of Foreign Wars, in Salt Lake City: "This past week, Prime Minister Sharon and the Israeli people took a courageous and painful step by beginning to remove settlements in Gaza and parts of the northern West Bank. The Israeli disengagement is an historic step that reflects the bold leadership of Prime Minister Sharon." The President was also quoted as saying: "We remain fully committed to defending the security and well-being of our friend and ally, Israel, and we demand an end to terrorism and violence in every form, because we know that progress toward peace depends on an end to terror." Yediot quoted Bush as saying: "We're helping the Palestinians to prepare for self-government." Yaron Dekel, the radio's Washington correspondent, notes that Bush made a connection between the new Iraq and Israel/Palestine. Jerusalem Post and Israel Radio reported that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has invited Vice PM and Finance Minister Ehud Olmert to visit her during his upcoming U.S. trip.

Yediot, Jerusalem Post, and Israel Radio reported that PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas called Sharon Monday night to praise him for what he called a "courageous" and "historic" decision, and congratulated him for carrying out the disengagement plan. The media reported that the two leaders have decided to meet. Jerusalem Post reported that PA Civilian Affairs Minister Muhammad Dahlan warned on Monday that "new violence" would erupt if Israel fails to relinquish control over the border crossings into the Gaza Strip.

Jerusalem Post reported that a senior GOI official told the newspaper that Israel is likely to begin dismantling unauthorized settlements in the West Bank

within 90 days of the evacuation of the northern West Bank settlements. The official was quoted as saying that the evacuation of the Gaza settlements has "changed the rules of the game." However, Israel Radio quoted a senior official at Sharon's bureau as saying that the disengagement, and not the dismantling of settler outposts, is presently on the agenda.

Ha'aretz quoted Brig. Gen Yossi Kuperwasser, the director of IDF Intelligence's Research Department, as saying on Monday before the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that the Palestinian terrorist organizations would try to increase their members' motivation by attacking soldiers after the settlers leave the Gaza Strip. This morning, Israel Radio reported that IDF troops were fired at near Jenin. There were no casualties among the soldiers.

Leading media reported on conciliatory talks Palestinian PM Ahmed Qurei held Monday with leaders of "rejectionist" Palestinian organizations in Damascus. Jerusalem Post reported that Hamas and Islamic Jihad announced Monday that they have reached an agreement with the PA according to which the two groups will not be disarmed.

Israel Radio cited the Council for World Jewry as saying that Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf has accepted an invitation from the organization to deliver an address. Maariv quoted Sharon associates as saying that the PM is considering quitting the Likud and establishing a new Center/Right party.

Yediot and Maariv reported that news web sites in Russia and Russian-language web sites in Israel spread false reports of Sharon's death.

Maariv reported that the United Nations Development Program financed banners bearing the UN emblem, which were displayed in Gaza Strip streets, and which read: "Today Gaza, Tomorrow Jerusalem and the West Bank." The newspaper says that the signs angered the Foreign Ministry and international Jewish organizations.

Ha'aretz reported that the Greek Orthodox Church in Jerusalem elected Theophilos III as a new patriarch on Monday, replacing Irineos I, who was dismissed over an alleged land deal with Jews in East Jerusalem that angered Palestinians and sparked a church crisis.

Under the headline "The First Bedouin Diplomat," Maariv reported that Ismail Khaldi, an Israeli Bedouin, who completed the Foreign Ministry's cadet course this week, explained the disengagement on Abu Dhabi-TV.

Channel 10-TV presented the results of a New Wave poll, which shows a trend reversal among registered Likud voters:
-"If elections for Likud chairmanship were to take place today, for whom would you vote?" Ariel Sharon: 35.6 percent; Binyamin Netanyahu: 28.3 percent. Maariv and Jerusalem Post also printed the poll's results.

1. Gaza and Northern West Bank Disengagement:

Summary:

Diplomatic correspondent Aluf Benn wrote on page one of independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "The political formula accepted in recent years, in the plans laid out by Presidents Clinton and Bush, teach us that the 'facts on the ground' are a function of the number of settlers."

Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "[Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's] remarks send the wrong message. America needs to stand firm, and publicly so, on Abbas's road map obligations to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure."

Ha'aretz editorialized: "Israel explicitly committed itself to dismantling 24 outposts immediately after the disengagement.... The undertaking was given to U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, without any

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connection to the road map."

Senior columnist Dan Margalit wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv: "Some Israelis can't stand the tears of joy shared by soldiers, policemen, and settlers."

Correspondent Yakov Shaus wrote in conservative, Russian-language daily Vesty: "Although the majority of Israelis support Ariel Sharon's [initiative], the demolition of settlements is a serious drama for them.... But some ... media feel happy about it -- and this is an obvious sign of a split in Israeli society."

Block Quotes:

I. "A Dream Undone"

Diplomatic correspondent Aluf Benn wrote on page one of independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (August 23): "With hindsight, the settlement movement in Gaza seems the futile delusion of 'a planner whose computer got unplugged in the middle,' as one senior source put it.... Sharon ... is correct when he speaks sadly about the shattering of the dream, and says that had the Jewish people settled a million settlers in the territories, instead of just a quarter of a million, things would have been different. The political formula accepted in recent years, in the plans laid out by Presidents Clinton and Bush, teach us that the 'facts on the ground' are a function of the number of settlers. That's the factor that will determine what will remain and what will go. International law sees no distinction between Netzarim and Gush Katif, which were destroyed, and a thriving city like Ma'aleh Adumim or the Ramot neighborhood in Jerusalem."

II. "Spotlight on Abbas"

Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (August 23): "Israel's Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has handed Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas a rare opportunity. He shouldn't blow it.... If Abbas succeeds in building, in his words, a 'civilized' Palestinian society, he will find many partners willing to help.... The U.S., Europe and Israel will be happy to support a forward-looking Gazan entity.... Rather than seeking to out-Hamas Hamas, it is imperative that Abbas, for the wellbeing of his own regime as well as the chance of moving forward in an accommodation with Israel, dismantle the various Islamic terrorist apparatuses and those that operate under his own Fatah umbrella. The basic international demands of the PA have been repeated ad nauseam.... Meanwhile, Sharon is accurately gauging the mood in Israel when he promises that there will be no 'second disengagement' and that 'consensus' settlements ought to be nurtured. U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has unfortunately

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chosen to stir the pot on this sensitive topic, telling The New York Times that she expected Israel to make additional West Bank concessions while paying mere lip-service to what America expected from Abbas. Her remarks send the wrong message. America needs to stand firm, and publicly so, on Abbas's road map obligations to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure. The onus is on Abbas to show his people how to make constructive use of the opportunity presented to them, at so painful a price, by Sharon."

III. "Time to Disengage From the Outposts"

Ha'aretz editorialized (August 23): "The results of the evacuation of [the northern West Bank settlements of] Sa-Nur and Homesh are a forgone conclusion.... At least another 24 additional illegal outposts deserve to be evacuated in the same manner. We are referring to some of the illegal outposts that attorney Talia Sasson mentioned in the report she presented to the government in March.... Israel explicitly committed itself to dismantling 24 outposts immediately after the disengagement -- ones that were put up during Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's term of office. The undertaking was given to U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, without any connection to the road map, and it is in Israel's interest to uphold it.... The illegal outposts are like magnets for the most negative elements among religious Zionism, and there is no reason to allow them to continue organizing themselves and to burgeon.... The Prime Minister has the right to decide on the next pullout, and he has no reasons or political constraints forcing him to dillydally."

IV. "Warmongers"

Senior columnist Dan Margalit wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv (August 23): "Some Israelis can't stand the tears of joy shared by soldiers, policemen, and settlers.... When they see an Israeli being uprooted from his home, they immediately remember the bitter fate of Palestinian refugees in 1948. They had a scenario, in which they envisioned that the settlers would infringe the rule of law, disintegrate democracy, attack soldiers and policemen with fists and sticks, perhaps even with machine-guns. But this didn't take place. How bad.... Ahead of the struggle over Sa-Nur today, [Ha'aretz] feared it would end with moderation, restraint, and responsibility.... Thus, [the newspaper editorialized on August 21]: 'In the coming conflict between the army and police and hundreds or thousands of zealots, there is no room for restraint or forbearance.' Why isn't there room for this?.... Why conquer the target forcibly when this can be done reasonably?"

1V. "Evacuation Is No Reason For Fraternizing With Terrorists"

Correspondent Yakov Shaus wrote in conservative, Russian-language daily Vesty (August 22): "Although the majority of Israelis support Ariel Sharon's [initiative], the demolition of settlements is a serious drama for them. Even if this decision was necessary because of the previous mistakes of the [Israeli government's] settlement policy, the scenes of clashes between soldiers and women and children are bound to traumatize people's hearts and consciences for a long time. But some ... media feel happy about it -- and this is an obvious sign of a split in Israeli society. This split is caused by different attitudes towards the disengagement.... After the unilateral disengagement is completed, [the left-wingers] would demand ... fraternity with the Palestinians. The right-wing opposition is ... waiting for the Labor party to withdraw from the government in order to take revenge of Sharon's 'capitulation.'"

12. Mubarak Presidential Campaign:

Summary:

The Director of the Interdisciplinary Center's Global Research in International Affairs Center, columnist Barry Rubin, wrote in conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "Has the moment come when change is unavoidable? No, not during Mubarak's reign, at least."

Block Quotes:

"Mr. Mubarak Goes to the Polls"

The Director of the Interdisciplinary Center's Global Research in International Affairs Center, columnist Barry Rubin, wrote in conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (August 23): "Mubarak can ... take real credit for Egypt's performance under his rule. Things could have been a lot worse, as Syria (more repressive, imperialist in Lebanon), Iran (Islamist regime), Algeria (disastrous civil war), and Iraq (foreign aggression and a bloodthirsty tyrant) have shown. The majority of people in Egypt seem to understand this fact, which is why they are not so eager to support either Islamist or democratic alternatives. Has the moment come when change is unavoidable? No, not during Mubarak's reign, at least. As for the future, he has not named a successor. The door has been left open for his son, Gamal, who now poses as a reformer himself. Yet Mubarak seems to understand how controversial, and potentially destabilizing, such a decision would be and has not come close to indicating that a family succession is his plan. There are plenty of ex-generals who have served as cabinet ministers, or governors who could be candidates when the real election -- just before or after Mubarak's death -- takes place."

13. Iraq:

Summary:

Hebrew University Professor of Political Science and former Foreign Ministry director-general Shlomo Avineri wrote in conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "There is no way of putting Humpty-Dumpty together again.... It would be advisable to think outside the box and realize that Iraq is not a country anymore."

Block Quotes:

"Iraq Is Not a State Anymore"

Hebrew University Professor of Political Science and former Foreign Ministry director-general Shlomo Avineri wrote in conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (August 23): "There is no way of putting Humpty-Dumpty together again. The Kurds and the Shi'ites will go their separate ways, and both entities have the paramilitary capability to do so. There is no Iraqi army capable of maintaining the unity of the country. And, just as in the former Yugoslavia, the separate countries -- Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia -- have a better chance of creating coherent and democratic systems than the old coercive Yugoslavia, the same may apply to Iraq.... The U.S. will obviously have to change its policy over Iraq -- maybe this is what President George W. Bush is devoting his vacation to. It would be advisable to think outside the box and realize that Iraq is not a country anymore. This is not the end of the world, but it calls for courageous and creative thinking about alternatives."

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